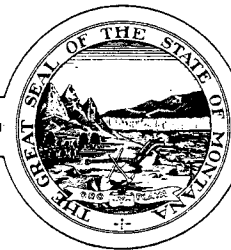


DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL
RESOURCES AND CONSERVATION

rescan



JUDY MARTZ
GOVERNOR

DIRECTOR'S OFFICE (406) 444-2074
TELEFAX NUMBER (406) 444-2684

STATE OF MONTANA

WATER RESOURCES DIVISION (406) 444-6601
TELEFAX NUMBERS (406) 444-0533 / (406) 444-5918
<http://www.dnrc.state.mt.us/wrd/home.htm>

1424 9TH AVENUE
PO BOX 201601
HELENA, MONTANA 59620-1601

Cover Letter

November 7, 2003

Governor's Office, Barbara Ranf, Rm. 204, State Capitol, P.O. Box 200801, Helena, MT 59620-0801
Environmental Quality Council, Capitol Building, Room 106, P.O. Box 201704, Helena, MT 59620
Dept. of Environmental Quality, Metcalf Building, P.O. Box 200901, Helena, MT 59620-0901
Director's Office
Water Protection Bureau
Dept. of Natural Resources and Conservation, US F&G Bldg. 1625 11th Ave. Helena, MT 59620
Director's Office
Information Services Section
Water Resources Division, 1424 9th Ave., P.O. Box 201601, Helena, MT 59620-1601
Scott Irvin, Water Resources Div., Lewistown Office, 613 NE Main, Suite E, Lewistown, MT 59457
Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife & Parks, 1420 E. 6th Ave. Helena, MT 59620
Director's Office
Fisheries Division
Steve Leathe, FWP Region 4 Office, 4600 Giant Springs Rd. Great Falls, MT 59405
MT Historical Society, State Historic Preservation Office, P.O. Box 201202 Helena, MT 59620-1202
Montana Environmental Information Center, P.O. Box 1184, Helena, MT 59624
Montana Audubon Council, P.O. Box 595, Helena, MT 59624
Meagher County Commissioners, 115 W. Main, White Sulphur Springs, MT 59645
Wildlife Federation, P.O. Box 1175, Helena, MT 59624
Trout Unlimited, P.O. Box 7186, Missoula, MT 59807
Northern Plains Resource Council, 2401 Montana Ave. Suite 200, Billings, MT 59101-2336
Trent Townsend, N. Fork Smith Water Users, 211 E. Hampton, PO Box 504, White Sulphur Springs, MT 59645
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, 10 W 15th St. Suite 2200, Helena, MT 59626
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, MT Field Office, 100 N. Park Ave. Helena, MT 59601

Ladies and Gentlemen:

The enclosed Finding of No Significant Impact/Decision Notice has been prepared for the North Fork of the Smith River Dam Rehabilitation Project. Please contact James P. Domino at (406) 444-6622 (e-mail jdomino@state.mt.us) should you have any questions about the Finding of No Significant Impact/Decision Notice or the Final EA. Copies of the Final EA are available upon request. The Final EA can also be viewed on the DNRC website at www.dnrc.state.mt.us. Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Jack Stults".

Jack Stults

Water Resources Division Administrator

STATE WATER PROJECTS
BUREAU
(406) 444-6646

WATER MANAGEMENT
BUREAU
(406) 444-6637

WATER OPERATIONS
BUREAU
(406) 444-0860

WATER RIGHTS
BUREAU
(406) 444-6610

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT/
NOTICE OF DECISION

November 7, 2003

Dear Reader:

The Montana DNRC released a draft Environmental Assessment (EA) on September 26, 2003, on the North Fork of the Smith River Dam Rehabilitation Project. The North Fork of the Smith River Dam is located in Meagher County, Montana, in Township 10N, Range 9E, sections 17 and 20. The dam is owned by the DNRC and operated by the North Fork of the Smith River Water Users Association. The proposed action calls for the development and installation of a new spillway with dimensions similar to the existing structure. The new spillway will be designed to meet or exceed all current safety standards. The existing outlet conduit would be lengthened and the outlet terminal structure would be removed and replaced with a new structure. All replacement concrete will meet current standards to improve the durability over the original construction. Additional seepage drains would also be installed at the downstream toe. Approximately 30,000 cubic yards of material would be excavated during construction, with approximately 20 acres of disturbed area. The overriding goal of this project is to improve the efficiency, safety and functionality of the North Fork of the Smith River Dam for its continued use for agricultural irrigation and recreation. Public benefits from this project include the continued use of reservoir water for agricultural irrigation and water-based recreation. Greatly enhanced public safety is an additional and very significant benefit.

The public comment period closed on October 27, 2003 with no comments received. The Montana Department of Environmental Quality, Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks, State Historic Preservation Officer and the Army Corps of Engineers were consulted as part of the EA process and for permitting requirements. No opposition to the project was expressed by these agencies.

Based on the EA's disclosure and analysis of potential impacts, the DNRC concludes that the proposed action will not result in any significant impacts. The DNRC will adopt the draft EA as the final EA and proceed with the preferred alternative. Copies of the Final EA are available upon request. The Final EA can be viewed on the DNRC website at www.dnrc.mt.us in the Environmental Documents section. Please direct any questions to:

James P. Domino
State Water Projects Bureau
DNRC, 1424 9th Avenue
P.O. Box 201601
Helena, MT 59620-1601
(406) 444-6622 e-mail: jdomino@state.mt.us

Thank you for your interest.

Sincerely,



Jack Stults

Water Resources Division Administrator